

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

THE RECTUM AND ANUS: THEIR DISEASES AND TREATMENT. By CHARLES B. BALL, M. Ch. Univ. Dub., etc., Surgeon to Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, etc.; (54 illustrations and 4 colored plates). Cassell & Company, London, New York, etc., 1887. 8vo, pp. 416.

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON THE DISEASES OF THE RECTUM. By ALFRED COOPER, F.R.C.S., Surgeon to St. Mark's Hospital for Fistula and Other Diseases of the Rectum, etc.; London: H. K. Lewis, 1887. 8vo, pp. 192.

Remembering the number of volumes that have already appeared on the subject of the two above named works, the reader is not unlikely to ask: "Are new ones really wanted?" Dr. Ball anticipates this question in his preface and replies that the improvements in wound treatment within the past few years have produced important changes, not only in the practice of surgery generally, but also in the surgery of the rectum.

Mr. Alfred Cooper makes no apology. Nor will any apology be deemed necessary from the author of either of these books by anyone who looks carefully into them. There appear, from time to time, in every department of surgery, essays and treatises by persons without experience of their own and also without the industry to gather and collate the experience of others. These productions are received in different ways by different sections of the profession. First, there are the men, usually very few, who regard themselves as the rivals of the new author, and every guinea which he may get as so many shillings out of their own pocket. Great and fierce is often the indignation of these. Secondly, there are the author's personal friends in another line of practice. They exhibit remarkable tolerance and charity. The third class is constituted by the professional critics. Ah, if authors knew how the majority of these longed to cry "Havoc," and what "dogs of war" they are when let loose from editorial restraint! But now-a-days such liberty is seldom allowed. A snarl or a growl, and—pop goes the animal's nose into the waste-paper basket, smothering the unpleasant noise among empty envelopes.

Lastly, there is the great and numerically far preponderating class of persons who look at, or borrow, or accept the free gift of, or who occasionally even buy, special treatises. Which of the above courses they take is of no consequence. If, by any means, "Brown on the Eves," or "Jones on the Rectum" can find a niche beside "Pears' soap," where memory holds her seat, Mr. Brown and Mr. Jones are content.

From such our journal endeavors to keep aloof. Returning to Dr. Ball and Mr. Cooper, the former has produced a treatise which stamps him as a surgeon of talent and experience and as an author unsparing of pains. The latter is well known as a specialist in rectal surgery of very long and varied experience, and as one of the most successful men in the profession in London. If, therefore, Mr. Cooper needed any justification for writing his book it would be found in the natural curiosity of men to know what the experienced and successful have to tell concerning their principles and practice. He has, moreover, earned a right to be heard by twenty years of silence.

The difference between the two books may be seen by comparing almost any two chapters dealing, each, with the same subject. Mr. Cooper gives a plain unvarnished narrative of what he has seen of the given diseases and of what he is in the habit of doing for its cure.

He refers incidentally to the teaching or practice of others, and generally with fairness and freedom from prejudice. In short, the 14 chapters of the book resemble a series of clinical lectures without illustrative cases, if such be possible. And although the cases are not reported, they seem to the reader to be in the background, as it were, for the little book is pervaded throughout by a practical tone.

A corresponding chapter by Dr. Ball is a kind of concentrated monograph. It surveys the teaching, and marshals the recorded observations of leading authorities, living and dead, British, American and foreign. In doing this Dr. Ball shows very great ability. It would be difficult to surpass some of these chapters, *e. g.*, that on excision for cancer, either in clearness, brevity, sound judgment, or in a certain quietude and ease of style.

CHARLES B. KEETLEY (London).

HIP DISEASE IN CHILDHOOD, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS TREATMENT BY EXCISION. By G. A. WRIGHT, B.A., M.B. Oxon., Assistant Surgeon, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Surgeon to the General Hospital for Children, Manchester and Pendlebury, Lecturer in Clinical Surgery in the Owen's College. 8vo. Illustrated., pp. 246; London: Longmans.